

Shortgrasser Can Believe Predictions Of Houston Growth

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Page 7

HOUSTON — The morning paper said that by the year 2000 Houston was going to be the largest city in the world. Judging by the number of people swarming in and out of this motel, it looks like if they'd tally up the score this district alone could tie for second place by next week.

Enough citizens pour through the doors of the city buses here to over-populate the Shortgrass Country. If a man isn't plenty sure-footed he hasn't a chance of staying upright at an elevator stop. And the corn plaster business must be awful good down here. It's impossible to keep the milling herds of hombres off your toes.

These city folks are a foolhardy breed under any conditions. Right across the street at the big medical center, doctors are transplanting human organs as casually as we reshoe a horse back home. Yet, with my own eyes, I've seen people drowsing in the lobbies and napping by the swimming pool. A flat idiot ought to have more sense than to shut his eyes this close to so much cutting action.

As fast as the surgeons are to pounce on second-hand hearts and used kidneys, anybody should have the gumption to realize that sleeping in a public place is as risky as staging a one-man peace expedition to Vietnam or volunteering for a press assignment to a Chicago convention.

Many of the motel guests are former patients of the hospital. I've been watching them closely, and I can't tell which ones have had a real overhaul job or which ones have merely had some new parts added.

The lady overseeing the coffee shop acts like she might have a heart transplanted from a veteran livestock banker. But you can't tell for sure. The world has about as many hard-hearted women as bankers.

The agony of staying in the big city can't last much longer. The imprints on my credit cards are already wearing smooth as the mouth of a canner cow. The unlimited opportunity to become lost over or under the freeways is beginning to become a grave problem.

If I can ever get my wife headed back home, the combined forces of all the Chambers of Commerce in the country won't lure me from the desertlands. Drouths and whirlwinds may be a terrible fate, but choking to death on smog-laden gasoline fumes isn't the best way to go.